

Alliance for a Healthy Montana
Making Progress – Building Momentum

Healthcare leaders growing solutions for health care needs of Montanans

- Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund
- I-146: Tobacco Settlement for Tobacco Disease Prevention
- I-149: Healthy Kids Healthy Montana Tobacco Tax Initiative
- 2005 Montana Smokefree Indoor Air Act
- 2005 Big Sky Rx
- 2005 Small Business Health Insurance Incentive Act
- 2003 & 2005 Expansion of CHIP to include more children in need
- 2005 Medicaid Services and Provider Rate Increases

Our Mission The Alliance for a Healthy Montana is a coalition of health care providers, consumers, insurers, voluntary health organizations, tobacco use prevention groups and other interested parties dedicated to helping shape a healthy Montana through specific public policy initiatives.

Our History The Alliance was formed to take advantage of the unique public health opportunity created by the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (MSA). Since then, the Alliance has been instrumental in the passage of three ballot initiatives that have resulted in millions of dollars in increased tobacco tax revenue and funds earmarked to expand health care programs.

These initiatives were Constitutional Amendment 35 which earmarked the interest from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund for funding tobacco prevention and health care. CA-35 also prohibited using these funds to replace funding for programs in place prior to December 31, 1999. CA-35 passed with 73 percent support of the total vote.

In response to Governor Judy Martz dramatically reduced the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP) funding from 3.5 million to \$385,000 the Alliance drafted Initiative 146 to dedicate 32 percent of the MSA dollars to fund MTUPP and 17 percent for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the Montana Comprehensive Health Association. This initiative passed with 65% support. In 2003 the legislature did a one time diversion of I 146 funds cutting the tobacco prevention to 3 million instead of the recommended 9.3 million. During this legislature Alliance members pushed for a 1.50 tax increase in the price of tobacco products to fund various health care needs, including CHIP and small business health insurance tax cut. The Legislature tabled the bill and instead passed legislation that increased cigarette taxes by 52 cents with the new revenue dedicated to the general fund rather than health care needs.

In 2004 the Alliance drafted I-149: Healthy Kids Healthy Montana Tobacco Tax Increase Initiative which increased the tax on cigarettes by \$1. This tax increase was dedicated to fund expansion of CHIP, improve Medicaid payments to health care providers, a new

prescription drug program for the needy and a new small business health insurance program. I-149 passed with 63% of the vote.

In the 2005 legislature the Alliance partners played a significant role in the passing of HB 634 "Montana's Clean Indoor Air Act." This act prohibits smoking on public school property and buildings and in all places where the public is free to enter, including buildings owned or occupied by political subdivisions. This act goes into effect on October 1, 2005. Stand alone bars and casinos are exempt through 2009. The measure passed 49-10.

Also, in 2005 the legislature and Governor honored the will of the people and appropriated funds to the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program as intended in the passage of I-146 in 2002. The program for the first time had been funded at a level that it could take a comprehensive approach to preventing kids from becoming long-term users and help those who want to quit. The lawmakers followed the Governor's proposed budget and appropriated and implemented all four programs designated in the I-149 Tobacco Tax.

Who We Are The collective commitment of Alliance members that include AARP Montana, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association of the Northern Rockies, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana, Deaconess Billings Clinic, Montana Academy of Pediatricians, Montana Association for Disability Services, Montana Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics, Montana Children's Initiative, Montana Council for Maternal and Child Health, Montana Diabetes Association, MHA, an association of Montana Healthcare Providers, Montana Medical Association, Montana Nurses Association, Montana Pharmacy Association, Montana Physicians for Prevention, Montana Public Health Association, Montana Senior Citizen Association, New West Health, ProtectMontanaKids.org, St. Vincent Healthcare, Montana Dental Association and WEEL.

These groups' work to reduce the death and disease caused by commercial tobacco use, has resulted in increased funding for tobacco use prevention, has increased the number of Montanans covered by health insurance and has strengthened the health care safety net. The vision and ambition of the Alliance has made and continues to make a healthier Montana.